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THE

MARTYR OF VERULAM,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

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AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

THOMAS RAGG,

AUTHOR OF "THE DEITY."

SECOND EDITION.

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TO

MY GENEROUS FRIEND,

THOMAS MANN, ESQ.

OF

ANDOVER, HAMPSHIRE,

TO WHOSE KIND ASSISTANCE I WAS INDEBTED

FOR THE MEANS OF PUBLISHING

"The Deity,"

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY HIS OBLIGED,

HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

In presenting to the world a second edition of his third publication, after each of the others has reached the same elevation, the Nottingham Mechanic feels it a duty incumbent upon him to return his sincere thanks to the public for the liberal patronage he has received; to the critics in general for their favourable notice of his productions; and more especially to those acknowledged masters of thought and language who have given him such kind assurances of encouragement and esteem. He started out in the literary world with a faint hope that he should not be altogether disregarded; but he is constrained to admit, that the reception he has met with has exceeded his most sanguine expectations.

With regard to the present publication (as intimated in the preface to the first edition) he conceived that a subject from our own national annals would not be altogether unacceptable; and from the approbation with which it has been viewed, it appears he was not mistaken. He did not follow the general custom of attaching notes, because he conceived the history too generally known to need it. No character except that of Estrilda is entirely ideal; and the examination of Alban is given, as far as poetry, and a slight amplification would admit, in the words of the Venerable Bede.

Nottingham, Sept. 1835.

THE

MARTYR OF VERULAM.

CANTO I.

THE

MARTYR OF VERULAM.

CANTO I.

The world had lain in darkness long;
And man ten thousand paths had trod;
But blinded by delusions strong,
In each one wander'd far from God.
Confusion and uncertainty,
Like clouds of thick impervious gloom,
Spread o'er its spheres expansively;
And made the globe a living tomb.
But now a dazzling blaze of light
Had on the moral chaos beam'd,
An effluence of the Infinite,
Which from His throne in grandeur stream'd,
More bright, more pure, than that which burst
Upon the void and formless deep,
And with its brilliance startled first
Black midnight from her dreamless sleep;
A light which still is shining fair,

And still will shine, till all the earth
Shall its restoring influence share,
And nature own her second birth.

The Sun of Righteousness divine,
High in the arch had now ascended,
And in His beams of beauty blended
Justice with mercy, truth and grace;
And from the hills of Palestine,
Rush'd forth a sweet refreshing gale,
Over Creation's withering face,
With life and health, restoring death,
And chasing away the noxious breath,
Of sin's destructive Upas-vale.

The Son of God had groaned and died,
The abject race of man to save,
And widely was the glad news spread;
Of Him, the slain, the crucified,
Who rose in triumph from the grave,
And down from heaven such blessings shed
On the lorn children of distress,
As made the desert wilderness
For them like Eden in its bloom;
And wreathed sweet garlands round the tomb.
Thousands from sin's detested thrall,
By His atoning blood set free,
Had hung their everlasting all
Upon the cross of Calvary;
And still to realms almost unknown,
The flood of peace kept rolling on,

Till Rome seemed destined soon to bow
To Jesus throned on Zion's brow.

The Prince of Darkness, vex'd to find
His sceptre crumbling to decay,
And man no more ignobly blind,
Disdain the proud Usurper's sway,
And conquer'd by the Spirit's sword,
Pay homage to his rightful Lord,—
To jealous fury raised at length,
The Roman monarch in his strength,
Who from the capitol sent forth
His edicts of destructive wrath,
To visit all with torturing death,
Who worship'd Him of Nazareth.
Nine times had persecution's flame
Left on earth's breast a brand of shame,
For which her race must answer yet,
Ere her last blood-red sun is set;
But fair Britannia's western shore
Was still unstained with martyr's gore,
When Dioclesian's ruthless hands,
Before the bigot's wrath was spent,
Assumed the reins of government.
Beneath his fostering care arose,
The scourge that reach'd more distant lands,
And fill'd the Christians' cup of woes;
The tenth, the greatest, and the last;
Exhausting that destructive blast,
Which, ere the church was wrapt in gloom,
Ere earth's best flower had lost its bloom,

From the black furnace of the pit,
Rush'd in wild fury over it.

Then Albion's little Christian band,
That smiled so long in hopeful peace,
Securely on their native strand
Joining the angelic symphonies;
While dews of heavenly love distilling,
Their hearts with sweetest raptures filling,
Had banish'd every dream of woe,
And made a paradise below—
Taught the fierce strife of faith to wage,
Groaned deeply 'neath tyrannic rage.
For wheresoe'er had yet been heard
The war-scream of Rome's ensign bird,
The persecution wasting spread;
And rank'd its thousands with the dead.
While heaven's arch-foe with pride elate,
Appear'd to wield the rod of fate;
And sent his satellites o'er earth,
To strangle, almost at its birth,
The cause which should his cause o'erthrow,
And lay his proud dominion low.
Vain hope! to quench ethereal fire,
Which still will blaze when worlds expire!
Or stop with death His conquering way,
Who death itself ere long will slay!

O'er Verulam day's flaming crest
Was shedding its departing ray,
And heaven in such rich colours drest

As made e'en winter's self look gay ;
For on the snows his golden beams,
Such lustre threw, so bright, so fair,
'Twas like the smile that sometimes gleams
On the cold visage of despair.
But silent was the alder-bower,
And in the grove no voice was heard,
Of the fair-plumaged singing bird,
That wont in summer months to wake
On flower-gemm'd tree or thorny brake,
Sweet welcome to the twilight hour.
And man all heedless of the scene
That nature spread before him there,
To cheer his wintry hours of care,
With smiles as summer-eve's serene,
Quaff'd not from those celestial fields
The bliss that sacred beauty yields.
Yet there was one whose watchful eye
Was fix'd upon the western sky ;—
A man whose bosom owned the glow,
Which thousands do not, cannot know ;
And felt the secret wasting chill
Which *they* possess no strength to feel,
Who live a life of sense alone,
To sensibility unknown.
'Twas Alban, he whose sainted name
Has since been known to deathless fame ;
A heathen then, who wander'd wild
In errors' paths, from God beguiled.

He loved the evening's dusky hour ;

He loved to see the lordly sun
Descending to his oozy bower,
When o'er the arch his race was run;
He'd watch'd it in heaven's thousand forms,
Midst holy calm and raging storms;
He'd view'd it on the battle plain,
Spreading abroad its golden train,
To mock with thoughts of peace and home,
Their hearts who never more might roam
O'er their loved native scenes, or meet
From kindred souls with welcome sweet.
He'd seen it on the lone blue sea
Sink down to rest resplendently,
And cast around such kindling rays,
As seemed to set the waves in blaze;
But never since those earliest years,
When love with gladness lit the spheres,
And nature's frame in beauty dress'd,
Of which it were not else possess'd,
From sea or plain, or mountain's brow,
To him it look'd as fair as now;
For those delightful beams thus shed,
On sullen winter's hoary head,
Seemed like the memory of the bliss,
So ravishing, which once was his,
Gilding his present gloomier days,
To cheer him with its distant rays.
And many a scene of pleasures past,
Wither'd by fell destruction's blast,
Then came in freshness to that mind,
Whose tablets their impression bore

So deep, they ne'er could lose it more;
But like the coins of ages gone,
We sometimes in earth's bosom find,
Not moulder'd yet to parent dust,
Need some rough cleansing hand alone,
To free from their adhesive crust,
To shew that impress still as fair,
As in the hour that stamped it there.

For he had loved, and love's fond dream,
While yet his buoyant heart was young,
Had taught him pleasure's sweet extreme,
And fill'd his heart with raptures strong;
Too strong to last, since fairest things
Pass ever on the fleetest wings;
And they who know the brightest joy,
Oft soonest meet its sure alloy.
But though the happy hours he knew
In matrimonial bonds were few,
Nought, nought besides in life had yielded
A bliss so holy, or so pure,
Or promising so long to endure,
From care's envenom'd weapons shielded.
For love thinks not of parting hours,
But strews its present path with flowers;
And treacherous hope, with syren song,
Still bade him look for seasons long,
In which, at that Elysian feast,
His soul should be a welcome guest;
Till death at length the charms dispell'd,
And on her couch his eyes beheld

His bride expiring lie before him;
And in love's last, cold, speechless trance,
Give such a wilder'd parting glance,
As told she only lived to adore him;
Which, like hope's last bright gleam of gladness,
But soothed his care to feed his madness,
While phœnix like, she died in giving
Birth to her image, warm and living.

The daughter of her father's woes,
The death-bed gift of her who bore her;
The only healthful flower that hung
On the wither'd stem from which it sprung,
Though two their nuptials graced before her,
Still lived; and over *his* life's close,
Seemed destined now to shed such rays
Of filial love, so fond, so bright,
Would recompense his earlier days
Of poignant grief and hopeless blight.
And more than mere parental ties
Had rent, if heaven's high hand had reft him
Of that one dearly cherish'd prize,
All, all that love and death had left him.

But not Estrilda's fervid smile,
In his parental eyes so fair,
Could sometimes his fond heart beguile
Of half the load of sadness there.
A sadness which he loved so well
He sought, he wished for no relief;
And when 'twas on him could not tell

If most 'twas like to joy or grief.
And such his feelings were that hour,
Awaken'd by the flitting day,
But still retaining all their power,
When all light's tints had pass'd away.
His eyes were fix'd upon the place,
Where last the setting orb was seen,
Though now that orb had left no trace
To tell where once its path had been;
And long, perchance, by thought enthrall'd,
In that unconscious vacant stare,
Had still been fix'd intently there,
Had not his daughter's voice recal'd
That now too vagrant mind of his
To earth and earth's realities.

" Father," exclaimed the artless maid,
" An aged traveller seeks thy aid!
" When first he asked respectfully
" The good man of the house to see;
" Proceeding, as I'm wont, to crave,
" The name or message I might bear;
" This was the answer that he gave,
" While his full heart seemed swollen with care:"—
" ' Tell him I am a wandering stranger,
" Seeking a refuge here from danger;
" Forced from my native home to flee,
" For love of one who died for me.'
" A strange reply; but in his mien
" Such mild majestic grace appears,
" Made more majestic by his years,

" That none who have that visage seen,
" Would think the poison of deceit
" Could pass such lips in words so sweet."

No eloquence of human tongue
Could e'er have urged a plea more strong,
Or more with soft persuasion rife,
To him to whom it was address'd;
For love was as his vital breath,
E'en though it breathed the gales of death,
The only pleasing thing in life
Which he had ever yet possess'd;
And waking from such trains of thought,
On her who once for him had died,
It seemed with more persuasion fraught,
Than e'en its native strength supplied.
From under his dark eye-lids first,
A tear of fellow feeling burst:
Then thus he cried, " Go, love, prepare
" A warm refreshment, while I seek
" Some kind and cheering words to speak,
" That haply his old age may bear
" With greater ease its load of care."

He said, then sped to meet his guest,
Who in a hairy cassock drest,
Stood waiting his approach. But why
That strange expression in his eye,
Unless a heart o'ercharged to tell?
The sight of Alban seems to raise
Emotions which he cannot quell;

Transfix'd in wonder he appears,
Then upward turns a thankful gaze;
And bursts into a flood of tears.

With every kind attention shewn,
And every art to friendship known,
The Briton strove to give relief
To that poor wandering son of grief.
Estrilda too, with tenderest care,
Her part in that blest work would bear;
And hoped ere long his storm-toss'd breast,
Of all earth's dearest ties bereft,
Would feel itself as sweetly blest,
As in the peaceful home he left.
Nor did his manners seem to say
Their generous cares were thrown away;
For grief appeared to lose its throes,
Since though a man of many woes,
Still constant peace and constant joy
Beamed ever in his mild blue eye.
Eight signs the moon had travell'd through,
Since first they saw the stranger's face,
Ere yet his kind protector knew
More than his name and native place.
Whether 'twas moodish mystery,
Or unassuming modesty,
That placed its seal upon his tongue,
And bound his lips with fetters strong,
Was more, far more, than he could tell;
But silence might have cast a spell
Around him, for a secret awe,

That bridled curiosity;
Made *him* obey the same strict law,
And hold his thoughts in slavery.
He felt convinced his guest was one
Who lived not for the earth alone;
For though he ne'er had heard him call,
By name, upon the gods he owned,
Religion seemed his life, his all,
His constant thought, his constant care;
And often he in spirit groaned,
And spent whole days and nights in prayer.
Then when he sat with them at meat,
His thankful eyes would upward stray,
With such a glance as seemed to say,
"Praise to the gods for food to eat."
And sometimes too when breaking bread,
Whilst in low voice strange words he said,
A smile would o'er his features break;
But one of such unusual kind,
As commonly would leave behind
A tear upon his cheek.

High, high, did Alban's bosom burn,
The father's sacred faith to learn;
For though his dress was not the same,
As he in youth had oft been told
Was worn by them in days of old,
To him that meek and hoary frame
Bespoke a relic of *that* band,
The priesthood of his native land,
Whom Rome's proud sons with sword and flame,

Had slaughter'd upon Mona's shore,
And leaving nothing but their name,
Cast down their rites to rise no more.

'Twas on the twenty-second night,
Since first the sire, with heart high swelling,
Found refuge in his peaceful dwelling;
The waxing moon from heaven look'd bright,
And through the open lattice seen,
The spangled arch was all serene;
When Alban thinking he might draw,
The secret from his aged breast,
Whose mystery kept his soul in awe,
Thus to his venerable guest.
" To me the lovely moonlight brings
" Sweet peace upon its silken wings,
" And dearer evening's sunset glow
" Can lay my stormy passions low;
" But thou, my father, dost not seem
" To need the changing moon's soft beam,
" Or peaceful evening's twilight ray,
" Thy bosom's turbulence to stay;
" Serenity is always there,
" Thou breath'st it as thy native air."

" True," he replied, " the stormy ocean,
" When heaves its breast with wild commotion,
" Can never in their beauty shew
" The sparks that in yon concave glow,
" But when the winds are hush'd in sleep,
" And stillness rests upon the deep,

" Reflected then our eyes might see
" The firmament's tranquillity.
" Thus once my bosom, passion tost,
" Was midst this world's confusion lost;
" But He who bids the tempest cease,
" Has fill'd it now with sacred peace."

" But is He then *thy* God alone,"
Cried Alban, " will he not impart
" The same sweet peace of power unknown,
" To yet another bleeding heart?
" Whom dost thou worship, for I long
" To drink at that celestial stream,
" Whose magic influence is so strong,
" To waken joy's extatic gleam."

The aged father wept and smiled
At this request; then answer'd mild,
" Designedly my lips have kept,
" Since first beneath thy roof I slept,
" Strict silence on my faith; nor spoken
" E'en in my prayers His earthly name,
" Which now on earth is but a token
" To light the bigot's wasting flame,
" That thou might'st witness how I live,
" Ere I that information give,
" By which, could thy kind heart betray,
" I now should cast my life away.
" Yet oft for thee my knees have bent
" Before His throne whose name I bear;
" And oft for thee my prayers been sent

" To Him who hears and answers prayer;
" And while I now His truths make known,
" May He who taught yon spheres to roll,
" The message of His servant own,
" And stamp His image on thy soul.
" See then a sample of the race,
" So oft esteemed the earth's disgrace,
" The offscouring of all things; see
" A Christian, —start not son,—in me.
" A worshipper of Him whose sway
" Earth and the circling heavens obey;
" Who left His blissful throne above,
" To teach mankind that God is love,
" And meekly heaved His dying groan,
" To raise His murderers to His throne."

" What teaches your religion then?"
Cried Alban, " holiest of men!
" For vague report declares such scenes
" As practised by the Nazarenes
" Make one's blood curdle; yet I see
" Nothing but purity in thee.
" But if on such an errand bent
" Christ left yon spangled firmament,
" Say, did he come to earth alone,
" And bring no vouchers from His throne?"

" My friend," replied the reverend sire,
" He was his own sure witness.—Love
" Flowed from His lips; and heavenly fire,
" More pure than those bright lamps above,

" Beamed sometimes from His sorrowing eyes
" While all His holy blameless life,
" Midst obloquy and constant strife,
" Proved Him a spotless sacrifice.
" Yet had He attestations; earth
" Resounded at his hour of birth
" With glad angelic anthems; twice
" From heaven a loudly thundering voice
" Proclaimed Him God's beloved Son;
" And often was that truth made known,
" By deeds of power and mercy done,
" Surpassing human strength alone.
" He healed diseases—raised the dead;
" By miracle whole thousands fed;
" Walked on the ocean as its Lord;
" And still'd the tempest by His word.
" And when by those he came to save,
" Thrust on to an untimely grave,
" O'er death itself a conqueror then,
" He shewed Himself alive again;
" And bidding His disciples tell
" The news wherever man might dwell,
" And make His great salvation known,
" Arose in glory to His throne.
" He came in meekness to the earth,
" A stable owned the Saviour's birth.
" He came to suffer, bleed, and die
" In its inhospitable clime,
" A sacrifice for human crime;
" That all who on his name believe,
" And his salvation here receive,

" Might reign in everlasting joy.
" But He ere long will come again
" In terror, as the Judge of men,
" When they who scorn Him now shall see
" The Nazarene in majesty;
" And bid the mountains on them fall
" To hide them from the Lord of all.
" *Yet* there is refuge, mercy waits,
" And beckons towards the heavenly gates;
" To thee I now the tidings bear,
" And if thy head can willing wear
" His crown of piercing thorns while here,
" Thou shalt his crown of glory share
" In a far brighter, happier sphere.
" On Him, my son, on Him believe,
" Forgiveness through His blood receive;
" To Him thy soul, thy all resign,
" And peace, and hope, and heaven are thine."

As thus the aged Culdee spoke,
A ray of that ethereal light
Which wakes the dead, in glory broke
On Alban's wondering sight;
And though the beams as yet received
From Gospel truths but half believed,
Were only as a feeble spark
Of meteor rushing through the dark,
Or as the first faint glimpse of day
Shot through a loathsome dungeon's chasm,
Where night's long undisputed sway
Is lost midst some convulsion's spasm.

Yet He who opens in the soul
A work of grace, completes the whole,
Nor leaves a flower he once could cherish
Unsheltered in the blasting wind;
Nor leaves a fainting heart to perish,
That has to Him its all resigned.

End of Canto I.

THE

MARTYR OF VERULAM.

CANTO II.

THE

MARTYR OF VERULAM.

CANTO II.

Hast thou e'er watch'd the morning's birth,
When light, down stooping from above,
Awakes the softly slumbering earth
With its first playful kiss of love?
Swift from the womb of darkness springing,
It gilds the east with fairest beams,
And all around rich lustre flinging,
On hills and vales, and groves and streams,
Recalls to active energy
Their many colour'd tenantry,
That with ten thousand pranks, new zest
To all the busy landscape giving,
Appear as though supremely blest
In the sweet consciousness of living.

Hast thou e'er mark'd the spring's return,
When nature 'neath the sun's warm ray,
Feels her long frozen bosom burn,
And casts her snowy robe away?
The trees put on their leafy dress,
And smile again in loveliness;
The birds again begin their song,
And skip the verdant boughs among;
And gardens, fields, groves, floods, and bowers,
Laugh joyous in their festive hours?

From morning's birth, and spring's return,
A lesson of heaven's dealings learn,
And see a faint, imperfect trace
Of God's best work—the work of grace.
For fairer than the day-beam bright,
That first dispels the shades of night,
Is truth's celestial cheering blaze,
When shining down on error's maze;
And more reviving than the spring
To pallid winter's slow decline,
Is the sweet warmth of love divine,
To virtues cold and slumbering,
That torpid in the bosom lay,
Till roused by its life-giving ray.

The words that Amphibalus spake,
Had left a weight on Alban's breast,
Which from its throne he could not shake,
Though by the burden much distress'd;
For as a freshly blooming flower

Transplanted in a summer hour,
Ere rooted yet its head will rest
Upon the earth's maternal breast,
Faint with heat, that must renew
Its beauty and its fragrance too,
So now to him 'twas kindly given
To know in sooth the God of heaven;
By His instructing Spirit shewn
That life can spring from death alone;
And fearful lest it might not be
Vouchsafed to such an one as he,
Who no such keen repentance knew,
As those whose tears the Apostle drew,
He drooped, a sinner, broken hearted,
Whom nought but sov'reign grace could bless;
And that which should have hope imparted,
Became the source of hopelessness.

Not unobserved by mortal eye,
As well as His whose guardian care,
All things, all times, all places share,
Pass'd this his inward warfare by;
Well could the reverend Culdee guess,
Whence rose his constant restlessness;
He knew the conflict raging there,
And o'er him watch'd with anxious care,
As the fond mother watches o'er
The struggles of the babe she bore,
When its expressive cries complain,
That keen disease, that tyrant fell,

Has seized it, ere its lips can tell
Where lies the seat of pain.

Silent he view'd a little space,
The buddings forth of heavenly grace,
But soon occasion took for speaking,
To ease a heart that seemed nigh breaking;
" My son," he cried, " 'tis not for thee,
" O'er whom the hosts of heaven rejoice,
" To sink in slow despondency,
" And sing with but a dove-like voice,
" The voice of mourning; lift thine eye
" To Him who now is throned above,
" Who bore thy sins on Calvary,
" And pleads for thee His bleeding love."

" Father," said Alban, " they who roam
" Way-worn amidst a desert drear,
" But though afar from home, sweet home,
" Still know their path will lead them there,
" And in each straggling bush and tree,
" A landmark of their progress see,
" May yet rejoice; but he whom night
" O'ershadows in an unknown way,
" Who knows not if his steps be right,
" Or will but lead him more astray,
" Has little cause for joy."

" My friend,"
Answer'd the sire, " thy plainings end,

" He who hath man's transgressions borne,
" Came down to comfort those that mourn;
" And he hath bless'd them too, and said,
" The mourner shall be comforted."

" Then let *them* hope for His relief,"
Thus Alban, " who can taste of grief;
" I am an outcast; this cold breast
" E'en here refuses to be blest.
" Not always thus my feelings slept;
" The time has been when I have wept,
" To think an act of mine should rend
" The bosom of an earthly friend.
" And when my thoughts bring back that hour,
" Which robb'd me of earth's fairest flower,
" When on her couch my Hilda lay,
" And sighed her fervid soul away,
" From that past scene of love and sorrow,
" Both tears and anguish I can borrow.
" But when this wayward heart of mine,
" Turns towards the scenes of Palestine,
" And muses on those pangs unknown,
" Whose poignance caused a God to groan;
" Or on that awful sight of wonder,
" Which rent the startled rocks asunder,
" When love's most rich and precious cup
" Was from the Incarnate's veins fill'd up;
" Dead, dead, to every soft emotion,
" And almost dead to warm devotion,
" So cold my loveless soul appears,
" That I could weep, aye weep for tears.

" And can a frozen breast like mine
" Have felt the beams of love divine ?
" No ! I but dream't so."

" Child of God !"
With tears the Culdee answered then,
" The path thou tread'st, I too have trod,
" Which calls past seasons back again.
" But I such wonders can make known
" Methinks will all thy doubts remove,
" That Christ has sealed thee as His own,
" And loves thee with a saving love.
" Didst thou not mark the sweet surprise
" That glisten'd in these aged eyes,
" And fix'd me as in speechless trance,
" When first thy features met my glance ?
" Thou might'st, but could'st not know, for why
" That sweet, but sudden burst of joy.
" Hear then;—when from Caer Leon driven,
" Unconscious where my steps to bend,
" I raised my heart and voice to heaven
" For counsel of my surest friend;
" A gentle slumber then came o'er me,
" And shewed a well-known path before me;
" While, said a voice, or seemed to say,
" ' Fear not, my son; behold thy way! '
" Kneeling, I blest His guardian care,
" Who thus had heard and answer'd prayer;
" When somewhat e'en more wondrous yet,
" My soul in that kind vision met,
" A picture of thy house and thee,

" Drawn to the strictest nicety.
" And louder, sweeter, than before,
" I heard my Saviour's voice once more
" Exclaiming from His holy hill,
" ' To Verulam and feed my sheep!'
" Which in my ears was sounding still
" When I awoke from sleep."

Here Amphibalus ceased, for now
Such peace sat on the listener's brow,
As told his fears were gone;
And heaven's sweet comforter possess'd
That lately wounded, bleeding breast,
While his whole visage shone
Like his who once on Sinai's height
Communed with God, almost too bright
For eye to look upon.
In words at length his transports burst,
And in exulting accents first,
" Praise God!" he loudly cried.
Then on his knees, with tearful face,
Gave thanks for that abounding grace
Which thus such joy supplied.
And can the Culdee silent stand
When thus he sees another brand
Pluck'd from the burning flame?
Ah! no; his tears, like Alban's, tell
What ecstacies his bosom swell,
And shake his aged frame.
And he too on his knees returns,
The tribute of a heart that burns

With gratitude and love;
Till lost in God, they both seem full
Of bliss unknown, ineffable,
Like the blest saints above.

He whose sure word was never vain,
But like the dews and moistening rain,
Fulfils the work on which 'tis sent,
Accomplishing his whole intent,
Has blest the day of small things; light
On Verulam thus faintly shed
Its pure effulgence, heavenly bright,
Soon wider and still wider spread.
The glad news of a ransom found
Was caught by numerous hearts around,
Who joyed to find their sins were gone,
All cancelled by the Holy One.
While like a cool and moistening breeze,
Following the track of Samiel,
God's Spirit breathed celestial peace,
Where late had passed the blasts of Hell.

A little church was planted there,
Beneath the Cambrian Exile's care,
Whose heart again with rapturous joy
And fond ecstatic hope beat high,
To see, despite infernal skill,
The cause of Christ progressing still.
And why should such a lovely flower
Burst while unfolding? will not God
Protect in danger's lurking hour

The few who in His paths have trod,
Amidst a guilty nation? Cease
Fond, overweening child of dust,
To question the Inscrutable,
The Fount of Love, the God of Peace,
Whose ways, though oft of mystery full,
Still are, and were, and will be just.
Ere yet the Culdee's lynx-eyed foes
Could trace him to his new retreat,
His work on earth drew towards its close,
And was in Verulam complete;
And Heaven had other ends in view,
When Hell let loose its furies there,
To desolate the faithful few,
And fill the little church with care.

The sun had risen long; and now
Was flaming on the horizon's brow,
Yet Alban's household still were sleeping,
Unconscious of the lurking foes,
Which ever since its orb arose,
Had round their doors strict watch been keeping.
For scarce before the twilight grey,
Like a swift herald from afar,
Proclaimed the near approach of day,
And quench'd his lamps the morning star,
That night their social worship ended,
Drawn out in length, they knew not why,
By such an inwrought energy,
With hopes and fears, and love all blended,

As seemed a presage from on high,
Of some new trial hovering nigh.

Awakened by repeated knocks,
As loud as are a tempest's shocks,
Alban himself was first to rise,
With sorrow in his opening eyes;
For ere the powers of mind, as yet,
  Could thought's wild, wanton wings control,
Ere reason's daily throne was set,
  Suspicion flash'd upon his soul.
Eager he to the casement flew
To find his sad surmises true;
Then bidding all his household keep
Their chambers still as lock'd in sleep,
With countenance o'ercharged with gloom,
He hasted to the Culdee's room.

The reverend Cambrian then was up,
  Pleading with Him who once sweat blood,
In prospect of the bitter cup
  That brimming full before him stood,
For aid in the approaching hour,
To brave the heathen's utmost power.
For he too by the knocking woke,
  Had guess'd the cause and calmly risen,
In preparation for the stroke,
  To welcome Judgment Hall or prison.
The heart of Alban swelled with grief,
So high, he scarce could find relief.

" Father," he cried in agony,
" Alas! what will become of thee,
" My house can shelter thee no more;
" And while guards surround each door,
" There is no egress for thee now!"
" Son," said the sire, with changeless brow,
" Heaven's will be done! the life *He* gave
" Who tasted death, my soul to save,
" 'Tis His to take away! but oh!
" May His rich mercy now be shewn,
" In thee preserving from the foe;
" For kind protection I have known,
" Yield me up to them."
" Hateful thought,"
Cried Alban, " no, to me thou'st brought,
" A sacred treasure, dearer far
" Than life and all its blessings are,
" And I, dear friend, e'en yet will save
" Thy grey hairs from a martyr's grave;
" Thy cassock for my robe exchange,
" They tell thee by thy garb alone;
" I'll meet them in that habit strange,
" And ere their error yet is known,
" Do thou in some new refuge hide,
" And God thy wandering footsteps guide."

" But then what fate will light on thee?"
Said Amphibalus, " how shall I
" Permit thee thus to die for me,
" And, traitor-like, ignobly fly?
" I have not so learnt Christ, to love

" Life more than virtue, or approve
" Of such a sacrifice."
" The doom,"
Said Alban, " which would then be mine,
" Though later, would as surely come,
" Should'st though at first thy life resign.
" For dark distrust would turn on me
" Her eyes of piercing scrutiny,
" And watch, with glances strict and keen,
" For harbouring thus a Nazarene.
" But 'tis no time for parleying;
" Now like an eagle's on the wing,
" Our speed should be: the impatient guard
" Not long will keep within the yard;
" Hark! hark those thundering blows! the door
" Gives way; and there is hope no more.
" Here on my knees my father—"
" Rise!"
The weeping Amphibalus cried,
" They seek not thee for sacrifice;
" And why should their bright steel be dyed
" With blood so noble;"—tears with prayers
The Verulamian joined to bend
The purpose of his reverend friend,
When clamouring footsteps on the stairs
Proclaimed the soldiers' rapid pace;
Groaning, he snatched a warm embrace,
And in the softness *that* imparted,
The aged Culdee, broken-hearted,
Gave up the prize.
Not swifter springs,

On trembling hope's deceitful wings,
A bird which, anxious to decoy
The footsteps of some truant boy,
Speeds fluttering to a covert near,
As though its nest and young were there,
Than now with holy fervour glowing,
The cassock o'er his shoulders throwing,
Glad to the door the hero sprang,
To meet the bigot's ruffian gang.
Just as he fix'd his station there,
The guards had reached the upper stair;
And whilst they gazed with hope inflamed,
" Whom seek you?" meekly he exclaimed.
" Thee," they replied, thou Cambrian goat,
" And know thee by thy hairy coat,
" Priest of the Christians." " Then give o'er
" Your search," he cried, " and fill no more
" This house with wild confusion, take
" The prey, and let your master, curst
" With worse, far worse, than wolfish thirst,
" His fury in its life-blood slake."

Answer'd the first, " thy words are strong,
" But thou'lt be tamed, old man, ere long,
" Demetrius has some gentle rods
" For those who slight the Roman gods,
" Which to thy lips will shortly teach
" The use of more becoming speech."
" Most valiant one," the second said,
" 'Tis pity sure that one so brave
" Should e'er for flight have turned his head,

" Shelter 'mong strangers thus to crave!
" But comrades, let us haste to court,
" Where soon his lesson he'll be taught;
" He now as well may save his breath,
" To curse the man of Nazareth."

This said, the veteran they enthrall,
And lead him to the Judgment Hall,
Where Dioclesian's Prætor sate,
The coming of his prey to wait.
But whilst he turned his dark eyes round,
And on the assembly calmly frowned,
Undaunted as the wild boar bays
His hunters in a forest's maze,
Swift through the court a murmur ran,
" The guards are foiled! 'tis not the man!"

" Who art thou?" fierce Demetrius cried;
" My name is Alban," he replied,
" And I my adorations pay
" To Him these heavens and earth obey;
" The living God who made them all,
" Who speaks, and nations rise and fall."
" What are thy family?" " For why,
Exclaimed the Briton warily,
(His bosom lit with heavenly fire)
" Thus of my family enquire?
" If my religion you would learn,
" *He* is my God whose name you spurn,
" Jesus of Nazareth." " Hadst thou not,"
'Twas asked, " a Galilean Priest

" Erewhile beneath thy roof a guest,
" To whom the garb thou now hast got
" Did once belong? If so, declare
" When from thy house he fled, and where,
" Or dread our wrath."

" Thy threats," he said,
(Raising aloft his dauntless head)
" Might shake the spirit of a slave,
" But threats are useless on the brave.
" *They* fear not death, whom God sustains,
" Nor heed its lengthen'd torturing pains;
" Secure of everlasting bliss,
" Where Jesus their Redeemer is.
" Know then, howe'er that fact may be,
" My soul disdains to answer thee."

" Caitiff!" upstarting from his seat,
Demetrius cried, " thy crime's complete;
" And well might justice at a blow,
" Lay such a daring rebel low:
" But since it is the Emperor's will,
" That mercy should be temper'd still
" With all our acts, one effort more
" We use, ere yet we give thee o'er
" To punishment. 'Tis his decree
" That Christians who will bow the knee
" Repentant to his gods, and make
" Due sacrifice, their wrath to slake,
" By that shall life and pardon earn,
" And safely to their homes return;

" This do, and live; or this refuse,
" And stripes thou'lt gain, and life thou'lt lose."

He ceased, and Alban straight replied,
While firmly he the threatener eyed;
" Well can I bear the Emperor's rods,
" But dare not own his demon gods;
" For heaven 'neath those would give me aid,
" But will not brook its cause betrayed;
" And Him who as my ransom died,
" I must obey whate'er betide."

" Then scourge him," said the judge:—but vain
On him was spent the torture's pain;
Unmoved their keenest rods he bore,
Till his cold limbs were drench'd in gore;
And still, in answer to their cries,
Refused the faithless sacrifice.
Hopeless at length his heart to bend,
The court pass'd sentence on him there;
And sent to seek that aged friend,
For whom he thus their wrath could bear:
While he to heaven's high will resigned,
Looked back on life, untouched by sorrow;
Within a dungeon's walls confined,
For execution on the morrow.

End of Canto II.

THE

MARTYR OF VERULAM.

CANTO III.

THE

MARTYR OF VERULAM.

CANTO III.

'Twas midnight over Verulam; bright
The moon look'd from her chamber now;
And shed a train of silver light
Upon the prostrate world below,—
That lock'd in slumber's soft embrace,
Forgot, at least a little space,
Their daily toils, and daily woes;
Save when, disturbing their repose,
In dreams of horror or despair,
The *echoes* of the voice of care,
More dismal than its *real* sound,
From scenes of sportive fancy's making,
Such scenes as ne'er are met with waking,
Reverberated round.

All, all seemed silence: scarce a breeze
Awoke the night song of the trees;
Whose rustling leaves, when louder lays
No more upon the air are flowing,
Soft whisper their Creator's praise;
While bright the starry watch-fires glowing
Beam forth his glory. Love's fond note
No longer swell'd the small bird's throat;
And scarce the winding river told
Its restless motion as it roll'd.

But yet *all was not stillness;* sleep
Had seal'd not *every* tearful eye:
There were, who could the night-watch keep
With earthly woe, and heavenly joy.
And undulating on the air
Was heard the lowly voice of prayer,
That like the fragrant incense shed
By richest flowers, its pinions spread
Upon the stooping heavenly gale;
And winged its flight from earth's low vale,
To where, in uncreated light,
Is veil'd the' Unknown, the Infinite.

That night each Christian's heart was full
Of joy and grief unspeakable;
And many a knee in secret bent,
And many a deep groan upward sent,
And many a tear in saintly eye,
And many a struggling fervent sigh,
Pleaded with heaven's Eternal Power

To aid the saint in life's last hour.
Yet Alban slept. What! can the lamb,
Or playful kid, frisk round its dam,
When thunders through the adjacent grove
The lion's voice? What! can the dove,
Secure as in her rock-clift nest,
Meander on the earth's green breast,
When pounces from its towering height,
The eagle's or the vulture's might?
What! when in some Columbian brake,
Its death-peal sounds the rattle-snake,
Can then its furr'd or feather'd prey,
Unawed by what those sounds convey,
Gaze on the fascinating eye
That meets it? Or the sailor boy
Upon the mast-head soundly sleep
When tempests lash the boisterous deep,
And waves on waves uplifted rise,
As threatening to invade the skies,
Whose angry currents thus had rent
Its breast, with fury still unspent?
No; these, when danger draws so near,
Must own the chilly damps of fear;
But in his dungeon's dismal gloom,
Confronted with the gaping tomb,
Rested the Christian's holy head;
While paradisal blessings, shed
From those exhaustless stores above,
Which centre in Incarnate love,
Fill'd e'en his very dreams with joy;
And woke immortal ecstacy.

He slept; for faith, whose lightning wing
Can pierce each thick cloud hovering,
And to the dazzling throne of light,
Still upward bend its daring flight,
Sees not in death a frightful foe;
Nor shudders at the vault below.
For though, when, (swoll'n with foaming pride
To be the minister of heaven,
When earth had scorned the warning given,)
Uprear'd its crest the ocean tide,
And over vale, and over hill,
Exulting wild, came rushing still,
Till all things lay engulph'd beneath,
And earth became a sea of death,
The hosts who in the whelming wave
Found but a dark and dismal grave,
Might loud lament,—yet he who rode
Securely in the ark of God,
Could smile at desolation then,
Assured it would subside again.
And so, the heaven-girt Christian sees
Vicissitude's wild revelries;
Safe in the ark of covenant love,
His Father at the helm above;
For him the wreck of nations bears
No signs of woe; the shock that tears
Earth's hidden bowels out, and throws
Death's tenants up from their repose,
Shakes not his faith, though mountains shake,
And in their nests the eaglets wake;
And death, to all things else a foe,

At him must strike a kindly blow,
A generous though uncourteous friend,
Who brings him life that will not end.
And fearless of the heathen's power,
Slept Alban in that awful hour;
Whilst visions of unearthly bliss,
And beatific hopes were his.

Oh firm confiding trust in Him,
Who once between the cherubim
Shone forth, in rays so dazzling bright,
Emblem of glory infinite,
And thence, (dear sacred truth, that brings
A balm to ease sin's venom'd stings,
And fills the heart with rapture sweet,)
Look'd smiling on the mercy-seat—
With what new strength dost thou endow
The heart that feels thy heavenly glow!
Heedless of danger's warning voice,
In tribulation taught to' rejoice,
Unmoved by love's bewitching smiles,
(More potent than a sorcerer's wiles,)
Or by the giant power of force,
That throws itself his paths across,
His steady footsteps keep the road,
That leadeth to the mount of God;
And drinking often by the way
Of those delightful streams that stray
From pleasure's river, ever flowing
Where amaranthine flowrets blowing,
Bespangle all the heavenly fields,

Whose verdure richest incense yields,
And holding fast that arm of love,
Which reaches from the throne above,
To give support to those who faint,
And gently guide the wilder'd saint
His hopes beat high with thoughts of glory,
Beyond whate'er was told in story;
While fond anticipation borrows
The joys of heaven, to ease earth's sorrows.

When day-light bursting through his prison
Proclaim'd the lordly *sun* had risen,
And all without, 'neath *his* first smile,
Seemed momentary transport, while
The lark that gladsome leads the choir
Of morning in Britannia's Isle,
Arose to greet his steps of fire,
Alban, awaking with the morning,
Hailed, gladly hailed, the blithesome dawning
Of that bright day, when he with joy
His martyr'd Lord should glorify;
And conquering death, exulting die.
Then quickly from his straw-bed rose,
To thank kind heaven for sweet repose,
And seek supplies of strength, to wield
The spirit's sword, and faith's strong shield,
Through all the scene before him lying;
And shew the gazing heathen race,
How, strengthen'd by the God of grace,
A Christian can rejoice in dying.

Sweet is a little season, spent
Communing with the' Omnipotent.
The choicest moment earth can give,
When scarce on earth we seem to live,—
  The pleasure from forgiveness springing,
When in contrition's brightening eye
The tear becomes a tear of joy,
  While the calmed conscience ceases stinging,—
The ray that from despair's dark glen
Lights back the soul to hope again,—
Nay, love's first warm and balmy kiss,
  Bestowed on lips that could not tell
  If then in heaven or earth they dwell,
Is agony compared with this.
Musing on hope's fruition nigh,
  The prisoner knelt as he were bending
Beneath the weight of love and joy,
  From heaven in copious floods descending;
While the full swell of Deity,
  Down on his raptured soul seemed tending.

Drink on! thou man of God, and taste
  While yet 'tis thine, of peace serene;
For soon shall feeling's strength lay waste,
  And desolate the beauteous scene;
Feeling that like hot Samiel's breath,
  Passing o'er eastern fields and groves,
Leaves nought behind but traits of death
  Where'er its scorching fury moves.
Drink deep! a double portion take,
  Fond saint, for such an hour draws near

A firmer, stouter heart might break,
Than beats within thy breast sincere;
And God, in mercy, thus renews
Thy strength, to stand against temptation,
With these his Spirit's richest dews,
The' o'erflowing joys of his salvation.
Nor is the trial sent in wrath,
By the high Lord of Sabaoth;
Nor is it, mortal, only sent
To shew thee thou art impotent;
For faith must e'er the fire abide,
To free it of all earthly leaven;
And that which is the fiercest tried,
Seems purest, and most meet for heaven.

The British Christian's fortitude,
When 'neath the heaviest of their scourges,
As stands a sea-born rock, he stood,
Unshaken by the beating surges,—
And that bright magnanimity
Which glisten'd in his dauntless eye,
While thus he nobly breasted danger
And death, to shield a wandering stranger,—
Had somewhat made his judge relent;
Though under the imperial seal,
Appointed for his furious zeal,
And still on persecution bent,
With such a bigotted fix'd hate,
That gladly he had met his fate,
Like Samson, at his death to slay
More than through life had been his prey;

Or close his eyes on earth's bright scenes,
Drowned in the blood of Nazarenes.
Yet, hardest hearts will sometimes move,
To see a nobleness of spirit
Themselves can never hope to' inherit,
Unbent 'midst rending tortures prove.
E'en as a little ice-shoal, torn
By currents from the frozen seas
That clasp the pole, and southward borne
By some impetuous northern breeze,
Must melt, if 'tis not backward driven,
Beneath the brighter, sunnier heaven.
Not that despair's wild agonies,
Or gentler pity's pleading cries,
Or e'en the melting voice of love,
His stern obdurate soul could move;
As soon the lute's soft voice might stay
The bellowing tempest on its way,
As any tender things impart
A softness to the bigot's heart.
Like the red showers and streams pour'd forth
From a volcano's blazing jaws,
His passions, led by blasting wrath,
Urged their wild course; and made no pause
While over scenes of beauty bright,
Careering in their dreadful might.
The steadfast rock alone withstands
The eruption's floods and flaming brands:
And nought but fortitude could shake
Demetrius's stern resolves, arrest

His vengeance in its course, or wake
Relentings in his stubborn breast.

But more than once he wished to save,
Consistent with the laws of Rome,
A Nazarene so nobly brave,
From meeting with a culprit's doom;
And though he lov'd to feast his eyes
On Christians' dying agonies,
For once he rather would have seen,
(And even wish'd it might have been,)
A soldier, bleeding from their rods,
Pay homage to the Emperor's gods.
And when permission at his court
Was for the captive's daughter sought,
To spend some moments with a sire
So shortly destined to expire,
On his salvation strongly bent;
At once he gave a full consent,
In hopes the gentler voice of love,
Might more than threats and scourges move
A heart which thus could willing give
Its life up, that a friend might live.

But wherefore, gentle maid, intrude
Upon that morning's solitude?
Why to the charnel-house thus bear
Down from the busy world above
The taper of enduring love?
It will but shew the horrors there

More plainly, till its feeble blaze
Amidst the noisome damps decays.
Well might'st thou spare him these last stings,
  Thy doating father's anxious heart
Is full enough of earthly things,
  And ye can only meet to part.
But love far strongest seems to grow
Beneath the heaviest showers of woe;
And seeks its choicest bliss to strain
From the full cup of maddening pain.
A hope against hope bore her up
Yet, to escape this bitter cup;
And should each doting wish prove vain,
And she return alone again,
To let so dear a father die,
Without one kind, one fond farewell,
To her were keener agony
Than could in parting moments dwell,
Whate'er the tortures they possess'd,
  To harrow her distracted breast.

Then softer tread, fond girl, and hear
  Those feeble accents heavenward flying;
Thy father's voice is on the air;
He, wrestling strong in fervent prayer,
Utters thy name, now doubly dear,
  Since all hope's love-lit dreams are dying.
The rending sigh his bosom breathes
Around her heart in coldness wreathes;
  Quick to its cells life's current steals;
And whilst "My father" faintly dies

On her pale lips, she senseless lies
Before him as he kneels.

Fond, fatal weakness! when the wings
Of faith are clogged with earthly things,
Fast droop the Christian virtues then,
Till nature seems itself again.
The strength with which the saint had borne
His lot, appeared to leave him now;
And every little scene of joy
To memory dear, and every tie
That bound a heart of feelings strong
To her, and her from whom she sprung,
Seem'd platted in a crown of thorn
Around his bleeding, burning brow.
Temptation too came o'er his soul,
As ocean's waves in fury roll
O'er city and o'er plain,
When midst the storm their dams give way,
And drear confusion, and dismay,
And desolation reign.
Conflicting thoughts then rack'd his brain,
And fill'd his breast with strife and pain;
The Culdee had no child to leave,
And why should his Estrilda grieve
For her departed sire,
Crush'd by the swift descending blow
That should have laid another low,
Beneath the Pagan's ire?
Or where was such iniquity
In worshipping ostensibly

The hated gods of Rome,
To save a life, might useful prove,
And cheer again, with smiles of love,
His desolated home?
Thrice he resolved his life to save,
And shrunk in horror from the grave;
And thrice, as by an angel voice,
Was taught again in death to' rejoice,
Through that atoning Lamb
Who drank death's rankest venom up,
And left but one drop in its cup
For those who trust his name.

To heaven at length he raised his eyes,
And begged for strength with tears and cries,
Nor did he ask in vain;
For He whose voice once hush'd in death
A tempest on Genesareth,
Relieved his burning pain.
Triumphant faith received its crown;
God's smile sent heavenly rapture down;
The tempter vex'd no more;
And ere again earth's fairest rays
Could meet him in his daughter's gaze,
The struggle, all was o'er,

End of Canto III.

THE

MARTYR OF VERULAM.

CANTO IV.

THE

MARTYR OF VERULAM.

CANTO IV.

Not he, who, buried in a trance,
  Reviving in the dreary tomb,
Essays to pierce, with hopeless glance,
  Its thick impenetrable gloom,—
Press'd down beneath a load of clay,
No more to hail the smiles of day,—
Opens his eyes in anguish wild,
More keen than that of Alban's child,
When animation brought anew
His doleful dungeon to her view.
As one aroused by feverish pain
  From gentle slumber's peaceful arms,
Strives, fondly strives, to sleep again,
  And for a little season yet,

Lock'd in its dear embrace, forget
That earth possesses aught but charms,
So fain would she have slept away
The remnant of life's clouded day.
But slumber is not for the mind
That seeks to leave its cares behind;
The pang that harrows it when waking,
Will seldom fail its rest in breaking;
For consciousness and thought combine
To rob the bosom of its ease,
Though torpid reason cannot join
In their fantastic revelries.

Too full for speech, her throbbing heart
Seemed nigh to bursting; tears had been
Relief, but tears refused to' impart
The calm that makes e'en grief serene.
In visions, hopeless, dark and void,
The future o'er her bosom roll'd;
And nought one glimpse of peace supplied;
Or thought's too busy wings controll'd.

There is a scene in horror's page
Whose very silence has a voice;
'Tis that, where late the earthquake's rage
Had bade destruction's host rejoice;
But where, with dark and lowering brow,
Sits noiseless desolation now.
And there is eloquence in woe,
E'en when most mute:—a tear may shew
Signs of strong feeling,—words may tell

What anguish doth the bosom swell;
But when no tear is seen, no word
Of sorrow or complaining heard,
When nothing but the eye's wild ray
Betokens deep distraction's sway;
Its language then is far more clear
For him who hath an ear to hear.

Alban beheld his daughter's air;
He saw, he felt her soul's despair.
" My child! my own dear child!" he said,
As to his heart the maid he press'd,
" Thy feelings curb; be comforted;
" And seek the Saviour's bleeding breast.
" Make Him thy refuge; He can bless
" E'en this afflictive stroke to thee;
" A Father to the fatherless,
" A Friend unto the friendless He.
" What brought thee hither? Didst thou come
" To seek my blessing ere I die?
" Take it; may God conduct thee home
" To glory; and all needs supply.
" Still thou lookest wistful! hast thou, say,
" Some little fond request to urge,
" Ere yet upon my heavenward way
" I fearless plunge in death's cold surge?
" Or dost thou crave some latest token
" Of love which is with life unbroken,
" Which in my memory thou may'st keep,
" When in the grave my ashes sleep?
" Speak love!—what!—art thou silent still?

" Then haply I but vaguely guess,
" And thou art come these arms to fill,
" And parting to be blest and bless.
" Take then a father's kiss! farewell!
" And oh may He whose voice can quell
" The tempest in its pride, or fling
" On winter's breast the flowers of spring,
" Make known to thee His saving love;
" And send His Spirit from above,
" To keep thee safely to that day,
" When Christ shall sweep his foes away."

That kiss the virgin's lips unsealed,
And thus her heart its thoughts revealed. —
" And wilt thou leave me then alone,
" My father? Have I thrice six years
" From thee such kind protection known,
" To lose thee thus at last? In tears
" Thy child, thy Hilda's, pleads with thee,
" My only friend! oh! live for me!"

The Christian with the father strove,
And heavenly zeal with earthly love;
As Alban still more closely press'd
His daughter to his aching breast,
Rose from his heart a struggling sigh;
And tears ran gushing to his eye;
But stifling both, he thus again
Spake in a calm persuasive strain,—
" Would'st thou, Estrilda, have me live,
" And in return for this world's breath,

" My honour and heaven's glory give,
" To shun a nearer shaft of death
" Than else might meet me? Shall I dare
" With these ungrateful lips deny
" That Saviour who for me could bear,
" In worse than human pangs, to die,
" When soon this aged frame must rest
" Through other cause on earth's dark breast,
" Cold and inglorious; while my name
" Is handed down to lasting shame,
" With that of traitor?"

" Have thee live!"
The maiden interrupting cried,
" What marvel! if my heart would give
" For that one blessing, all beside?
" Go ask the shelter-loving flower
" If it *could* smile in hues as gay,
" Were its o'ershadowing greenwood bower
" By some rough tempest swept away.
" Ask the once sacred misletoe,
" If still 'twould bloom, were that stout oak
" On which it now delights to grow,
" Fell'd by the woodman's powerful stroke.
" Hast thou not watch'd my feeble head
" When slumbering in its cradle-bed?
" Didst thou not waive me on thy knee
" In weak half-conscious infancy;
" And with thy kind paternal care
" A tender mother's loss repair?

" Whose was the hand, in childhood's hours,
" That cull'd for me the choicest flowers;
" And deck'd me in the wood's fair spoils,
" Well, well repaid with thankful smiles?
" Whose were the fond encircling arms
" That kept me free from night's alarms;
" And laid my little head to rest
" Upon his kind protecting breast?
" Who, from the wars returning home
" Just when I reach'd my girlhood's prime,
" Preferr'd me to the pomps of Rome,
" And pleasures of the eastern clime;
" And gazing on me, oft would tell
" Of her whom once he loved so well;
" And speak of the resemblance strong,
" I bore to *her*, then vanish'd long?
" No other prop I e'er have known,
" But leaned for strength on thee alone;
" And where can I protection find,
" If thou should'st leave me here behind?

" From heaven!" replied the father, " He
" To whom I oft have sought to guide thee,
" If Him thou'lt serve, a friend will be;
" And still with every good provide thee.
" Oh! follow on to know the Lord;
" Hold fast the little thou dost know;
" And seek through life, the full reward
" Of those who trust Him here below.
" Beg the Redeemer to impart
" The earnest of His saving love;

" And cleave to Him with all thy heart,
" When once thou dost His goodness prove."

" How can *that* faith to me be dear,"
Exclaimed Estrilda, with a sigh,
" Which robs me of all pleasures here,
" And seals at once the springs of joy?
" Alas! I thought thou lov'dst me well;
" And still of love must fondly dream,
" When on those earlier scenes I dwell,
" Lit by its fair, though transient beam.
" Yet, I *but* dream;—for oh didst thou
" Thus plead with me in anguish now,
" I feel that I could give up all
" My soul holds dear, or prostrate fall
" To all the idol gods of Rome,
" To cheer thy desolated home
" With my lov'd presence."

Colder far
Than petrifying waters are,
Those sounds came o'er him. " Lord Most High!"
He groaned with dreadful fervency,
" Forgive her! Oh my child recall
" Those awful words, nor fill with gall
" The last cup of my life! for me
" Bow to a heathen deity!
" Oh! I *had* hoped that heaven's fair light
" On thee had shed its first faint rays;
" And soon would banish error's night;
" And lead thee forth from sin's dark maze.

" And must each dearest wish be cross'd?
" And all my earthly hopes be lost?
" Oh God! with Thee in anguish wild
" I plead; have mercy on my child!
" Salvation and submission give;
" And bid a rebel sinner live!"—

Tears choked his words; she shrunk away
Abash'd; that look—the alter'd ray
Of those dear eyes she could not bear;
'Twere worse than even the despair
She sought to shun; and could it be
That she had err'd so grievously?
Repentance such as heaven bestows,
And none except the Christian knows,
Thrust in her breast its pointed dart;
And plunged it deeply in her heart.
" Oh Thou Almighty One," she cried,
" Who thus my father hast supplied
" With power to bear the ills of life
" Unmoved, amidst a world of strife;
" 'Thou, who alone canst strength bestow
" To stand 'neath this mysterious blow,
" Heart-broken now I turn to Thee;
" Great God! reveal thyself to me!"

Do angels strike their harps of gold
At sight of penitential tears,
And yet can man unmoved behold
The sight which all heaven's host reveres?
Oh! tell it not on that blest shore,

Where pains and sorrows all are o'er!
Lest e'en the blest for once should weep
To think our feelings thus can sleep.
Oh! tell it not on that dark coast
Where dwell the spirits of the lost!
Lest Hell itself should burst with joy
At man's insensibility.

No word the Saviour's lips have spoken,
Shall through duration's length be broken;
And He hath taught the struggling mind,
That they who seek his face shall find.
The virgin felt her heart run o'er
With joy and peace unknown before;
And too enraptured now to speak,
(The cloud of wrath at once swept by,)
With tears of anguish on her cheek,
And heavenly transports in her eye,
Looked like the still and calmëd sea,
Strewn o'er with wrecks of tempests past,
Rejoicing in tranquillity,
And smiling at the low-laid blast.

But who can Alban's bliss express,
To see the change so quickly wrought;
And find her thus from hopelessness,
At once to Jesus' bosom caught?
He looks, as now his arms enfold her,
As though 'twere heaven but to behold her.
" Farewell!" he cries, " my dear, dear child,
" A child of God at last I leave thee;

" And now of every care beguiled,
" Can meet the blow that must bereave thee.
" Farewell! the destined hour draws near,
" And soon the summons will be here.
" Thou know'st where I my casket keep,
" Secure it while the vultures sleep;
" For soon, perchance, these sons of Rome
" May ravage thy paternal home.
" Enough is there of earthly store,
" To last thy life's short season o'er;
" For that thank God, and use it still
" As one who seeks to do His will.
" Find, if thou canst, that reverend sire
" For whom I gladly now expire,
" And tell him 'twas the last request
" Of him who owned him once his guest,
" Whose soul in purer realms above,
" Feasts upon God's redeeming love,
" That to his orphan progeny,
" He will a father's place supply."

He said, then gave the customed sign
For worship of the Power Divine.
They kiss'd, embraced, and knelt in prayer,
To Him whose ever watchful care
Supplies the wants of all creation;
And to His people brings salvation.
" Oh Thou Supreme!" cried Alban, " Thou,
" Before whom saints and angels bow,—
" Whose throne in unapproached light
" Is set, Thou, to whom day, and night,

" And past, and present, and to come,
" Are one unchanging now—dear Home
" Of the lorn pilgrim! blest Retreat
" Of those who find forgiveness sweet!
" Lord God Almighty! while we raise
" Our hearts and voices in Thy praise,
" Look on us through Thy bleeding Son,
" And for His sake our off'rings own.
" Hosannahs to Thy name, oh King!
" For mercies ever on the wing
" From heaven to earth; and peace bestowed
" On those o'er whom affliction flowed
" Like ocean's bounding waves. Great God!
" We thank Thee for thy guardian care;
" And bow to Thy chastising rod;
" For Thou art wisdom, and will ne'er
" Afflict Thy children needlessly;
" Or strength in trial's hour deny.
" Behold us as we bend before Thee,
" And strive, though feebly, to adore Thee;
" Upon Thy Servant's dying head,
" Thy grace, Thy strength, Thy Spirit shed,
" That he, by Thee upheld, may shew
" Contempt of all things here below;
" Assert his Saviour's matchless worth,
" And glorify Thy name on earth.
" Watch o'er Thine handmaid's future life,
" And keep from needless care and strife;
" And draw us both by faith and love
" To Thine empyreal seat above.
" Then, to Thy dear and hallowed name,

" Will we ascribe, with tongues of flame,
" Might, majesty, dominion, praise,
" Honour, and power, to endless days."

The hour is come; the summons brought;
Again he treads the Roman court,
Again with holy fervour rife,
He scorns their offer'd terms of life.
His doom is fix'd; death's feast is spread;
The sheep is to the slaughter led.
But who, of all the throng'd array,
That toward the scaffold bend their way,
Can turn to heaven a visage brightest,
Or move along with bosom lightest?
Oh he, the hated Nazarene,
Chief actor in the tragic scene,
Visions of fadeless glory roll
In grandeur o'er his swelling soul.
He sees his Saviour throned on high,
In bright celestial majesty.
He sees the convoy sent to bring
His spirit to the lofty King.
" Oh come!" they cry, " Oh come away,
" To where the living waters stray!
" Come leader of the martyr band
" That soon shall grace thy favor'd land!
" Come to the blissful courts above!
" Come to the Saviour's arms of love!
" Come to the paradisal plains,
" Where joy unmix'd for ever reigns!
" Come, range the congregation's mountain!

" Come, bathe thy soul in life's pure fountain!
" Come join the notes of heaven's bright choir,
" With harp of gold and tongue of fire!
" Eat angels' food with the hosts on high!
" And drink of the cup of boundless joy!
" Or bask in the rich essential light,
" That beams from the throne of the Infinite!
" Oh! why on the earth thus lingering stay?
" The Saviour awaits thee! come away!"

" I come!" he cries, as his head he lays
Exulting on the block beneath;
" Praise, praise to Jehovah, ceaseless praise,
" That thus I'm taught to rejoice in death!"
In his last prayer is the Christian bending;
By why is the axe so long descending?
A groan of horror first he hears;
Then such a frantic shout as rears
The gaping multitude who see
One of the earth's nobility.
Clamour succeeds, and hum of voices
Discordant; but his soul rejoices
In peace; and still the Christian bends,
Nor from the block his head upraises;
Till falls the fatal blow, that sends
His spirit to its Lord's embraces.
While in his sever'd head, the eyes
Are upward turned with thankful gaze,
Towards its bright pathway in the skies;
And move the lips as though in praise.

Ask you whence rose that long delay?
Oh he who was ordained to slay
The generous Briton, touch'd to see
Such peerless magnanimity,
Had cast away his axe, refusing
To do a deed so hateful, choosing
Rather with such a man to die
Before the Bigot's furious eye;
And share at least his earthly glory,
In the bright page of future story.

The End.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

GOD IS LOVE.

'Tis written on the beams so bright,
That issue from the orb of light,
And through the welkin widely stray,
Turning the cheerless night to day,
That God is Love, who thus hath given
A semblance of His throne in heaven,
The way-worn traveller to bless,
While wandering through life's wilderness.

'Tis written on the earth's green breast,
In grass and smiling herbage drest,
And deck'd with many a gemmy flower,
And fruit-tree rich, and greenwood bower,
That God is Love, who thus supplies
All living things' necessities;
And from His kind and liberal hand,
Profusion sheds on every land.

'Tis written on the course of time,
The chronicle of human crime,
Where many a deed of blackest dye,
Is traced in lines of infamy,
That God is Love, who tears the brand
From retribution's lifted hand,
And with long suffering yet endures,
What still His righteousness abjures.

'Tis written upon Calvary's brow,
Where "mercy robed in crimson" now
Proclaims salvation, full and free,
To the lorn race of misery,
That God is Love, who sent His Son,
To bleed for crimes that we had done;
And from the grave in triumph bring,
Its broken gates and death's keen sting.

'Tis written on the Christian's heart,
That once has felt sin's venom'd smart,
But now with peace and gladness rife,
Owns the warm throbs of sweeter life,
That God is Love, who thus bestows
Such blessings on His rebel foes,
As set their hearts from hatred free,
And conquer all their enmity.

'Tis written in immortal fire,
On sin's unwasting fun'ral pyre,
Within the adamantine gates,
Where death his own destruction waits,

That God is Love, the God erewhile
Rejected with a scornful smile;
And, oh! it deepens hell's despair,
To see that truth recorded there.

But in the realm of glory bright,
'Tis seen in plainest, clearest light,
Where God, in Christhood veiled, appears,
Turning to smiles all this world's tears;
For there it is He's felt and known;
There creatures live in love alone;
And all who in that region move,
Must feel and know that God is Love.

THE MOTHER OVER HER DYING BABE.

Nay, turn those languid eyes again on me,
My sweet one! let me, let me yet once more,
Behold them! oft when lone and silently,
The pillows of thy slumbers I've watch'd o'er,
While health's bright flush was thine, they've opening caught
The smile that softly beam'd on them, and given
With tenfold radiance back. Alas! that thought
Is anguish now; the spell can ne'er be riven,
But substance turned to shade must mock my soul
With disappointment, as the spectral forms
Of joys departed, rise; and o'er me roll

Visions of lost beatitude, 'midst storms
And clouds of present horror. Yet one look,
My child! my darling! one last look to seal
The dream of love, to close the fatal book
Of fond remembrance! Oh! I feel, I feel
As though my heart e'en now were in the tomb
To which its life is hasting; wilt thou not
Look on me then, and with soft smiles illume
The death-bed of my hopes? I yet have got
One left for thee; one last, fond, tender smile
Of blessing, where concentrate all the rays
Of many, many tears, that washed it while
It struggled into birth!—Come, one fond gaze:—
Turn thee away! I cannot bear the sight!
Those, those are not the stars that wont to shine
So sweetly on me; or their magic light
Is quench'd, or tears of woe these orbs of mine
Bedim. Why strugglest thou? Why on the breast
That oft has pillowed it, hangs thy dear head
So heavy? Ah it is a long night's rest
Thou'rt seeking, nor again at morn wilt shed
Thy cheering influence on me. Lord of life,
Must we then part? But ah, I dare not pray,
The idol that has fill'd my heart with strife,
From my too doting eyes he takes away;
And who shall stay his hand? Another gasp!
Dear Lord, I cannot bear it; let me breathe
My own soul into her frame, and loose death's gasp
With an exchange of life. Why, why enwreathe
Thy limbs thus round me? Oh! my child, my child,
She's dying! Father of all mercies, ease

Her torments, soften these convulsions wild,
And I'll resign her. Cruel fondness cease
To lengthen out her chains and drag her down
From glory;—but I cannot give her up,
Spite of myself, my bleeding heart will own
The product of its life-tide still; its cup
Of richest earthly blessing, e'en though now
Brimming with poison;—but cold sweats come o'er
Her frame; the dews of death are on her brow—
She's gone! my child, oh God! she is no more!

VERSES

TO MY FIRST-BORN CHILD, ON HIS ASKING THE QUESTION, WHEN RATHER MORE THAN TWO YEARS' OLD, "WHY DOES THE SUN GO DOWN?"

"Why does the sun go down?"
Thy infant lips exclaim,
As thou gazest on the departing orb,
While heaven seems wrapt in flame;
It goes to cheer another sphere,
Make other hills look bright,
And chase away from distant realms,
The hovering shades of night.

"Why does the sun go down?"
Perchance thou soon mayst say,
As the fond bright dreams of childhood's years,
Are vanishing away;

Those fairy dreams desert thee now,
And their magic charms are riven,
To shew the earth is at best but dark,
And light proceeds from heaven.

" Why does the sun go down ? "
Perhaps thou mayst whisper too,
As the warmer beams of youthful love,
Are flitting fast from view;
To bid thee fix thy heart on things
Beyond the gulph of time,
And never expect enduring bliss,
In the earth's ungenial clime.

" Why does the sun go down? "
Thou mayst ask in deeper gloom,
When the hand that writes these verses now,
Is laid in the silent tomb;
And oh may heaven this sacred truth
Stamp deep on thy bosom then,
It does but quit the scene awhile,
In glory to rise again.

WHERE IS THY BROTHER ABEL?

GEN. IV. 9.

WHERE is thy brother Abel ?
Thou murderer, answer where;
He talked with thee on yonder plain,
Beside the altar there;

Sweet peace was in his eye serene,
  His heart was filled with love,
As he pointed thy unbending soul
  To him who reigns above.

Where is thy brother Abel?
  Thou fratricide, ah where?
Thy heart in childhoood's earlier hours,
  His joy or grief could share.
Ye danced beneath the same green tree,
  In the same bower ye played,
And oft have wandered hand in hand,
  Beneath the grove's deep shade.

Where is thy brother Abel?
  Unfeeling one, ah where?
Lock'd in each other's fond embrace,
  Ye once could know no care;
Nor the silence nor the gloom of night
  Could wake an anxious fear,
While in each other's arms ye lay,
  Or felt each other near.

Where is thy brother Abel?
  Ungrateful one, ah where?
His lips dwelt long upon thy name,
  As he breathed his morning prayer;
He begged that heaven would fix thy faith
  On Him that is to come,
To take away the curse of sin,
  To bring God's outcasts home.

Where is thy brother Abel?
Thy red hands answer where;
No light in his sunken eye,
No smiles his cold cheeks bear;
His lips are closed, his tongue is sealed,
His locks are wet with gore,
The cooling breeze revives him not,
'Twill wake him now no more.

His blood has raised its voice to heaven,
And calls for vengeance loud;
Yet mercy still with smiling face,
Looks o'er the thunder-cloud;
But a vagabond and a fugitive,
Thou now on earth shalt be,
Though the latest breath that past his lips,
Was spent in prayer for thee.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH.

Shall I who boast Christ's hallowed name,
And look to Him for life and bliss,
Attempt to hide fall'n nature's shame,
In any other robe than His?
Shall I another offering bear
Before my God? Or in my own
Scant fig-leaf righteousness appear,
In presence of the Holy One?

No! let the moon repudiate
The sun's light first, and shine with beams
Unborrowed; let the plant, elate,
The warming and the moistening streams
To heaven restore, and still be rife
With verdure, and with sweetness fraught;
And nature give essential life,
To God who called her out of nought.

With Christ my hope, and Christ my song,
His merits made by faith my own,
I dare stand forth amidst the throng,
That circle His effulgent throne;
And counting all my gain but loss
For Him, in borrowed beams I shine;
Mine the dear product of His cross,
The righteousness of Jesus mine.

THE LOST ONE.

'Twas but a dream, but oh how sweet
The dreams of love, how wondrous fair;
Around its couch what graces meet,
What lovely forms assemble there;
Upon its dear luxuriant things
His youthful heart had feasted long,
Revell'd in rich imaginings,
And strayed hope's flowery fields among.

He loved in boyhood's early hours,
And then saw love's best sun beams shine;
For like two fair but slender flowers,
Whose stems around each other twine,
They grew; the maid had caught his flame;
Their bliss they in each other found;
Hope's joys and fears they shared the same,
By sympathetic influence bound.

Companions in the walks of youth,
They felt the same attachment still;
Companions in the paths of truth,
In concert turned tow'rd Zion's hill;
For when convinced earth's lot is strife,
She sought for pleasures ever new.
His soul which lived but in her life,
Turned homeward, hopeward, heavenward too.

Thus pass'd their years till manhood came,
And found their hearts but joined the more;
For then more ardent burned their flame,
And sought that bond unsought before;
'Twas formed;—the smile, the tear, the sigh,
The flutt'ring throb, the vow was past;
And in an ecstacy of joy,
He claimed her for his own at last.

He bask'd in love's warm sunny beams,
Bless'd with a little heaven below;
And yielding to delirious dreams,
Then thought for aye to banish woe.

Large were his hopes, his raptures strong,
'Twas all he prayed, he wish'd no more;
His was the prize he'd cherish'd long,
And now his cup of bliss ran o'er.

But wilt thou make a paradise
On earth, vain dreamer? Hath not He
Thou call'st thy Lord, with warning voice,
Declared 'tis not thy destiny?
Hath He not taught, in many a line,
Of sterling truth and wisdom sound,
That tribulation here is thine,
And peace in Him alone is found?

And wilt thou still then hope for joy,
Unmix'd with care? With earthly things,
In feverish warmth, thy soul alloy,
And clog its heaven-aspiring wings?—
Forgetful what the Scriptures teach,
That earth is but a vale of tears,
He sees Elysium in his reach,
And nought to cloud life's coming years.

Then bathe in love's wide ocean now,
A loose to all your passions give,
And with the Epicurean vow,
To live in pleasure while you live.
Fond youth, the hand that fills our cup,
If blessings turn our thoughts from heaven,
With gall and wormwood brims it up,
And blasts the gourds His love has given.

Soon, soon his looks new cares betrayed;
Consumption's gently wasting power
Came o'er his bride, as evening's shade
Comes withering o'er the passion flower,
And close, and closer, seemed to twine
The chain of love around his heart,
As watching o'er her slow decline,
He found they were but joined to part.

He saw her on her death-bed lay,
All hope was past, her sinking eyes
Seemed as in search of him to stray
'Midst love's last dreamy rhapsodies;
He grasp'd her hand, her lips he press'd,
And seemed as madden'd by the stroke;
Yet not a sigh escaped his breast,
No murmuring sound his silence broke.

For though his hopes were blasted now,
He owned the justice of his God,
And taught his bursting heart to bow
To His all-wise, almighty nod;
He felt that he had idolized
What soon to death a prey must fall,
And yielded all on earth he prized,
To Him whose goodness gave him all.

They laid her on her fun'ral bier,
He raised the sheet their hands flung o'er,
And long he gazed, but not one tear
Shed on the cheek so loved before;

For, keen as a torpedo's bite,
The shock made sense of feeling flee,
And seemed a vision of the night,
Rather than dread reality.

Her corse was in the grave-yard laid;
Tears glistening stood in many an eye;
Yet not one tear his cheeks displayed,
The channels of his grief were dry;
For, taught temptation to withstand,
His lips exclaimed, "The Judge be Thou,
Not I, my Father, though thy hand
Indeed is heavy on me now."

MEMORY.

Ah who would drink of the Lethean stream,
Which banishes thoughts of the past?
Ah who would extinguish fair Memory's gleam,
As she shines like the moon with a faint borrowed light,
Dispersing the clouds which oblivion's night
O'er the circling horizon has cast?
If the past a black volume of sorrow appears,
Then blunt are the arrows of woe;
For when our whole lives have inured us to tears,
E'en grief will some comfort bestow;
And if Memory should smile like the glad face of joy,
While sorrow's dark path is before,
Then still let us muse on our pleasures gone by,
And dream of the future no more.

THE BANE OF THE TRIUMPH.

Triumphant from the church-yard gate,
The wonder of the village crowd,
A new-made bride, with heart elate,
Young Zilla, in her chariot rode.
And smiling here, and smiling there,
As oft acquaintance caught her eye,
Seemed, (such her easy graceful air)
The very queen of joy.

Beauty was in her youthful form,
A half-blown rose of scarce sixteen,
She stood unconscious of the storm
That slept behind life's cloudy screen;
And on her cheek a flush of pride,
Love's softer carmine deepened o'er,
Which with its lustre dignified
Her beauty still the more.

For yet a stranger where the tide
Of sorrow loves its cypress grove,
A city's boast, a lordling's bride,
She hoped to taste the sweets of love,
Where wealth secured from want and care;
Where splendour shed its sunny ray;
And gaiety might soothe despair,
Should she become its prey.

Untaught that the ecstatic joy
Of love is nature's gift alone;
That splendour's brilliant, dazzling eye,
Hath often like a dog-star shone;
And feverish care will haunt alike
The palace and the lowly cot,
And man unceremonious strike,
Whatever be his lot.

But, as she looked among the crowd,
With pleasure dancing in her eye,
She caught a glance which seemed to enshroud
At once her soul's hilarity;
It was a glance with phrensy fraught,
That spoke of pangs too strong to bear;
A piteous look that woke the thought
Of lingering cold despair.

'Twas from a youth whom she had sworn,
With never-failing truth, to bless,
But now had left, alone, forlorn,
A prey to abject wretchedness.
It 'minded her of broken faith,
And love that set before its noon;
And told, in accents sad, that death
Would end its sorrows soon.

She gazed:—deep crimson flushed his face,—
He turned and hurried fast away;—
She traced him while her eyes could trace;
To fond anxiety a prey.

Then visions wrapt her senses long,
And when those visions seemed to break,
Her pride was gone, her heart unstrung,
And tears were on her cheek.

THE SABLE PLUME.

The Sable Plume, it fills the mind
With thoughts of a darksome shade,
As it sadly tells that another has joined
The rest of the lowly laid.
It speaks of death to the living heart,
Where vigorous hope beats high,
And fears in the strongest breast can start,
As it slowly passes by.

The Sable Plume, 'tis a mockery
To man's fond fairy schemes,
Which tells as it meets the sickening eye,
Where end all pleasure's streams.
Oh! the ocean of death receives them all,
They are lost in its dark abyss;
And mortality weaves a funeral pall,
To spread over all that is.

The Sable Plume, 'tis pride's last dream,
As it struggling gasps for breath;
'Tis expiring grandeur's latest beam,
The pageantry of death.

For man through this vain world of strife,
Seeks widely for outward shew,
And here end the gaudy pomps of life,
In the pomp of well-feigned woe.

It bids the Christian think of home,
And the worldling think of death;
Reminding each that the hour will come,
Which shall steal their cherish'd breath.
And black though the shade which around it flings,
The halo of the tomb,
Yet, oh for the deep, *deep* thoughts it brings,
I love the Sable Plume.

THE DEPARTING PILGRIM.

Let me lean against that tree, gentle stranger: thy arm must be weary. I can sit me down in peace beneath its shadow, though leafless are the branches of its pride. Let the aged rest together. Like me, it has braved the fierce storms of many winters; and like me too it is desolate at last. But my branches have all withered around me; they have left me a solitary trunk. So a lone rock uplifts its bare head in the ocean, and endures all the fury of the waves.

Yet wait with me a little while, kind youth; my stay will not be long. I have girt up my loins for my journey. I am travelling to a distant land, and would not

depart without one look upon me; and bid me a kind farewell.

Why, why should I die in the spring-tide of the year, when the young birds sing sweetly in the bushes; and the eye can turn around on invigorating green? The drear scenes of desolation were more pleasing to my soul.—But let such be the departure of the Christian, when the smile of his God beams upon him, and turns his dark winter to the loveliness of spring.

Thou art yet, gentle youth, in the dawning of thy life; but I have seen blasted flowrets on the bosom of sweet May. Forget not the end of thy journey. Our path to the grave is strewn sometimes with roses; but it leads not the less down to silence and to gloom. *One* rose alone holds its sweetness through life, and perfumes the dark mansions to which thou art hastening. It is the Rose of Sharon.

Fresh blows the gale of evening, as it wantons in my hoary locks; and dear is its freshness to the heart that is faint. It revives the spirits of the dying. So the Spirit of Jehovah, as He moveth where He listeth, revives with His sweet influence, the dark bosom of despair.

Is not the sun setting, kind companion? Lift me up in thine arms to gaze once again upon its glory, for that gaze must be my last. Again shall he rise with the morning, in all the fresh vigour of his beauty. His beams shall again gild the mountain and valley, and illumine the wide blue arch of the horizon. But to me no longer shall they shine; these eyes will be closed upon their light.

Orb of departing grandeur! thou bringest to my thoughts

the days of other years, when in the fond season of childhood I have gazed on thy descending light; or when pointing to the loved ones of my manhood's earlier hours, the beauties of the passing day; they have gone to the dark valley before me; and I too, like thee, am departing; but, like thee, I shall rise again.

Methinks I behold in the splendour of yon heavens, the fast approaching chariot of my Lord. Hallelujah! hallelujah! Come! Lord Jesus! Come quickly! I pant for the embraces of Thy love. These dim eyes shall open in a region of glory, where no sun shall be needed to illumine the bright sphere. My thirst shall be quenched with the waters of that river which flows everlastingly from the bosom of my God: and the fruit of immortality which grows upon its borders, shall renew the wasted strength of my fast decaying frame.

Hallelujah! hallelujah! I shall see Him in His glory! my Redeemer! my beloved! my unchanging faithful friend! I shall lean upon that bosom which was pierced for my transgressions: I shall feast upon His smiles who has bought me life with death! I shall bask in His effulgence who is brighter than the sun! Immortality of rapture! Immortality of rapture! Come, Lord Jesus! come quickly! Halle—lu—jah!!

W. DEARDEN, PRINTER, NOTTINGHAM.

EXTRACTS

FROM SOME OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE

MARTYR OF VERULAM, AND OTHER POEMS.

BY THOMAS RAGG.

Second Edition.

LONDON: LONGMAN & CO. PATERNOSTER ROW.
DEARDEN, NOTTINGHAM.

"What Mr. Ragg has accomplished is surprising; an age ago it would have been thought wonderful."—*Dr. Southey.*

"The author of this poem is, we believe, a mechanic at Nottingham. He has been before the world twice already, and his writings are valuable additions to what may be called *Religious* in contradistinction to merely *Moral* poetry.

"The plot of 'The Martyr of Verulam' is historical, and extremely inartificial. The subject is British, and Alban, the Martyr, is the hero of the narrative:—the reader will remember that Alban was executed for his adhesion to the Christian faith.—The poetry is of a high order: always correct in its versification; often most elevated in sentiment. A few instances will shew that we do not over-estimate the merits of Mr. Ragg's poetry. The following is splendid, the part speaks of the Gospel light:—

> "More bright, more pure, than that which burst
> Upon the void and formless deep,
> And with its brilliance *startled first*
> Black midnight from her dreamless sleep.

"The part we have italized displays boldness and originality. Equally good is the simile with which the following concludes:—

> "And many a scene of pleasures past
> Wither'd by fell destruction's blast
> Then came in freshness to that mind,
> Whose tablets their impression bore
> So deep, they ne'er could lose it more;
> But like the coins of ages gone,
> We sometimes in earth's bosom find,
> Not moulder'd yet to parent dust,
> Need some rough cleansing hand alone,
> To free from their adhesive crust,
> To shew that impress still as fair,
> As in the hour that stamped it there.

"In conclusion, we have to add our good wishes for the success of this unassuming, pious little volume. It is well worthy a place in the library of a Christian."—*Derbyshire Courier.*

"As a simple, and yet serious narrative, the poem will be read with considerable pleasure; in a strain of metrical sweetness, it conveys pure and holy sentiments worthy of a Christian pen. We find much difficulty in making an extract suited to our limits, as the story is a continued chain, and a single link would scarcely convey the nature of the structure. But perhaps not the least interesting picture of the whole is the Martyr in his dungeon:—

"Yet Alban slept. What! can the lamb
Or playful kid, frisk round its dam,
When thunders through the adjacent grove
The lion's voice? What! can the dove,
Secure as in its rock-clift nest,
Meander on the earth's green breast,
When pounces from its towering height,
The eagle's or the vulture's might?
What! when in some Columbian brake,
Its death-peal sounds the rattle snake,
Can then its furr'd or feather'd prey,
Unawed by what those sounds convey,
Gaze on the fascinating eye
That meets it?

.. .. ..

No: these, when danger draws so near,
Must own the chilly damps of fear:
But in his dungeon's dismal gloom,
Confronted with the gaping tomb,
Rested the Christian's holy head.

.. .. ..

He slept; for faith, whose lightning wing
Can pierce each thick cloud hovering,
And to the dazzling throne of light,
Still upward bend its daring flight,
Sees not in death a frightful foe;
Nor shudders at the vault below."

Salisbury and Wiltshire Herald.

"Mr. Ragg has acquired more than ordinary celebrity by his poem entitled 'The Deity,' which, considering all the circumstances connected with its composition, is unquestionably one of the most remarkable productions of genius in the English language. Nor will this small work detract from his well earned fame. It shews the same deep and original tone of thought, and is rich in evangelical sentiment."—*Wesleyan Magazine.*

"The work is highly creditable to its author, both as a literary and a Christian man. Of the large and leading production we may observe, that in many of its portions it is beautifully and pathetically written, and prominently recognizes the gospel of the grace of God. The following extract from the opening of canto II, we presume, will gratify the reader, as well as furnish a specimen of the style and manner of the work.

"Hast thou e'er watched the morning's birth,
When light, down stooping from above,

Awakes the softly slumbering earth,
With its first playful kiss of love?
Swift from the womb of darkness springing,
It gilds the east with fairest beams,
And all around rich lustre flinging,
On hills and dales, and groves and streams,
Recalls to active energy
Their many colour'd tenantry,
That with ten thousand pranks, new zest
To all the busy landscape giving,
Appeared as though supremely blest
In the sweet consciousness of living.

"Hast thou e'er mark'd the spring's return,
When nature 'neath the sun's warm ray
Feels her long frozen bosom burn,
And casts her snowy robe away?
The trees put on their leafy dress,
And smile again in loveliness;
The birds again begin their song,
And skip the verdant boughs among;
And gardens, fields, groves, floods, and bowers,
Laugh joyous in their festive hours.

"From morning's birth, and spring's return,
A lesson of heaven's dealings learn,
And see a faint imperfect trace
Of God's best work—the work of grace.
For fairer than the day-beam bright,
That first dispels the shades of night,
Is truth's celestial cheering blaze,
When shining down on error's maze;
And more reviving than the spring,
To pallid winter's slow decline,
Is the sweet warmth of love divine,
To virtue cold and slumbering,
That torpid in the bosom lay
Till roused by its life-giving ray.

"The other poems in this volume are short and of miscellaneous character. They are all endowd with the attributes of genuine poetry."—*New Methodist Magazine.*

"A delightful production, illustrating the history of Alban, the first English martyr. Poets too frequently have sought for themes in the regions of fiction, and fables of pagan mythology. There are subjects equally interesting in the truths of ecclesiastical history, and this is one of them. It is told with much pathos, and many sentences of real beauty might be pointed out. The minor pieces are likewise good."—*Zion's Casket.*

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